

**Montana State University Accreditation Self-Study
Report on Classified Staff Survey
January 27, 2009**

Introduction

In November, 2008, a random sample of MSU classified staff was drawn. Many classified staff have regular access to computers and the internet, so over half of the sample was sent an email invitation to participate in an online survey about a host of issues to be addressed in our self-study document in preparation for NWCCU accreditation. Job titles with less access to a computer at work were mailed via campus mail a paper version of the survey, with instructions to complete and return the hard copy survey or complete the survey inline. In all, we sampled 700 classified staff and received 298 responses, 71 on paper, for a response rate of 42.6%.

Respondents had about two weeks to complete the survey. In addition to the initial email and paper invitations, sent over Senior Vice Provost Joseph Fedock's signature, we sent two reminder emails to the email list (no additional reminders went to the hard copy list). We offered no incentives for participation, so the reasonably strong response rate reflects classified staff interest in the self-study process.

The survey for classified staff was fairly long and detailed, with sections on supervision, workloads, resources, governance, finance, and planning, facilities, institutional integrity, job satisfaction, salaries and benefits, as well as a series of free-text responses in which respondents could address other issues. We also included a few demographic items to use in analyzing the survey.

Respondents

The tables below shows the percent of respondents in each of the demographic categories included in the survey. Union members are under-represented. Women are over-represented in the sample, with about 77% of the responses but just 64% of the classified workforce. Proportionately more respondents chose position types of Secretarial/Clerical and Classified Professional, while Service/Maintenance and Technical/Paraprofessional are underrepresented. This may be erroneous self-classification as well as some sample bias. Where subgroups are examined in the analysis, we can be confident that sample bias is not an issue, but position type is harder to test, so generalizations to position categories are tenuous at best.

1. What is your union status?

	Sample	Population
Union	60.1	
Union-exempt	39.9	

2. What is your gender?

	Sample	Population
Female	77.4	62.4
Male	22.6	37.6

3. How many years have you been employed at MSU (please enter a whole number)?

Mean = 7.99

4. What is your position type?

	Sample	Population
Secretarial/Clerical	31.8	24.6
Technical/Paraprofessional	18.9	25.6
Skilled Crafts	1.7	4.9
Service/Maintenance	4.9	25.7
Classified Professional	34.6	19.2
Don't know	8.0	

Analysis

In each section of the survey, staff members were asked to respond to a series of Likert items, where a statement was presented and respondents chose whether they strongly agree (assigned a value of 1), agree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), disagree (4), or strongly disagree (5) with the statement. Averages above three indicate disagreement, an average right around three suggests neutrality, and averages below three indicate agreement. A few other question formats appear in the survey where appropriate. The valid percentages of the survey respondents in each category appear below, along with the mean response value.

Statistically significant differences in the mean responses ($p < .1$) are described for three subgroups. Gender differences are reported where they are statistically significant. Union status (eligible or exempt) is also examined and reported only when differences are significant. Finally, the length of service at MSU is considered, with 5 years as the cut point. When those with five or more years of service differ from those with less than five years, the text will indicate the difference.

Supervision

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about supervision at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
My job expectations are made clear to me.	29.7	53.0	8.1	7.8	1.4	1.98
I have opportunities to discuss job-related concerns with my supervisor.	43.9	44.6	6.8	4.1	0.7	1.73
My supervisor gives me the flexibility to respond to personal and family emergencies during regular work hours.	64.4	29.2	4.7	1.0	0.7	1.44
I have the opportunity to take on added responsibility when appropriate.	40.5	47.0	8.1	2.4	2.0	1.78
My supervisor treats me with respect.	49.3	34.5	10.1	4.1	2.0	1.75
I am given the opportunity to be creative in my work.	37.4	38.4	18.4	4.1	1.7	1.94
My supervisor is able to accurately judge my performance.	28.7	45.4	16.7	6.5	2.7	2.09
My supervisor gives me necessary guidance so I that I may perform my job effectively.	28.0	42.9	17.6	8.4	3.0	2.16
My supervisor recognizes the contributions I make to the institution.	35.1	41.2	14.2	7.4	2.0	2.00
The process used to evaluate my work performance is fair.	27.5	37.3	27.1	5.1	3.1	2.19

Overall, classified staff are positive about their supervision and their supervisors. Large majorities agree with each statement. A majority agrees with the statement about the fairness of the evaluation process, but a quarter of the responses are neutral on this item. The most positive reaction is given in response to flexibility for family and personal emergencies. Very few respondents strongly disagree with any of these statements.

There are no statistically significant differences according to union status or gender on any of these items. Longevity, however, does affect responses. Classified staff who have been at MSU for five years or more are slightly less positive than their newer colleagues on several statements. While they still agree on average, the mean scores are higher (less agreeing) for longer-serving staff on opportunities to discuss concerns, opportunities to take on responsibilities, the respect shown by the supervisor, the ability of the supervisor to judge performance, and the supervisor's recognition of contributions.

Workloads

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about workloads at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
My workload is consistent with other employees at MSU who have similar jobs.	11.9	40.5	28.6	15.0	4.1	2.59
I have the time to complete my work in a quality way.	18.4	51.4	14.3	12.9	3.1	2.31

Staff are not as overwhelmingly positive about the items on workload. Majorities still agree with both statements, but almost three in ten are neutral on the consistency of workloads across campus.

Women are more positive in response to the statement about having time to do quality work than are men. Both groups agree on average, but women score 2.25, closer to "agree" versus men's 2.54, which is right in between "agree" and the neutral response category. There were no statistically significant differences according to union status or longevity.

Resources

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about resources at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
MSU has adequate professional development opportunities for people like me.	7.2	39.0	25.7	23.6	4.5	2.79
My department/office has sufficient resources so I can perform my job.	18.0	59.2	11.9	7.5	3.4	2.19
My department/office provides sufficient travel resources so I can meet my job expectations.	12.5	39.2	39.2	6.9	2.1	2.47
I have sufficient equipment to satisfactorily perform my job.	22.9	60.1	9.9	6.5	0.7	2.02
I have sufficient support staff to satisfactorily perform my job.	16.4	44.9	24.0	11.0	3.8	2.41
Sufficient opportunities are provided so I can learn the skills I need to do my job.	18.4	48.3	17.0	13.3	3.1	2.34

Classified staff agree in large majorities that there are sufficient resources and sufficient equipment in the department to get the work done. Smaller majorities agree that the department provides sufficient travel resources and opportunities to learn necessary skills and that there is adequate support staff. It is worth noting that nearly 40% are neutral about travel resources. A plurality agrees with the adequacy of professional development opportunities, with a quarter neutral on that item and slightly more than a quarter in disagreement.

Longer-serving staff are just about neutral (2.94 on average) on professional development opportunities compared to their shorter-term co-workers (2.64). No other statistically significant differences emerge across sub-groups on these resource items.

2. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about computing resources at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
I have adequate access to a computer.	64.6	29.3	2.4	3.1	0.7	1.46
I have adequate e-mail access.	63.6	30.3	2.7	2.7	0.7	1.47
I have adequate access to the technical/computing assistance I need.	45.4	39.6	7.5	5.8	1.7	1.79
Computer troubleshooting is provided in a timely fashion.	35.7	45.7	12.4	4.5	1.7	1.91
Repair work required to keep my computer running is provided in a timely fashion.	32.4	42.1	18.3	5.5	1.7	2.02

Classified staff express strong agreement about access to computers and email, with very few respondents disagreeing and virtually no strong disagreement. Agreement also follows the rest of the computing resource statements, with pluralities agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement.

While all subgroups agree on average with these statements, there are some significant differences across groups. Union members have higher (less agreeing) averages on access to a computer and email than union-exempt employees. They also average higher on the timeliness of computer repair work. Women are more likely to agree with all three access statements – computer, email, and assistance – than are men. Longevity does not significantly affect attitudes toward computing resources.

Governance, Finance, and Planning

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about governance, planning, and budgeting in your department.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
Classified staff have adequate representation in long-range planning and goal-setting in my department.	6.2	35.7	34.7	18.9	4.5	2.80
Classified staff have adequate opportunity for input into the budgeting process in my department.	7.2	17.2	38.5	27.1	10.0	3.15
I have an opportunity to participate in decision-making in my department.	13.0	39.6	23.5	16.7	7.2	2.66
My department's budget and planning processes are integrated.	7.2	24.1	51.0	14.5	3.1	2.82
My department's budgeting process is an open process.	3.4	17.6	44.1	24.8	10.0	3.20

Statements about departmental planning and budgeting show a level of disenfranchisement for the classified respondents. Pluralities or majorities are neutral on opportunities for input on departmental budgeting, the integration of the department's budget and planning activities, and the transparency of departmental budgeting. Pluralities agree with classified representation in departmental planning and individual opportunities to participate in decision-making. On average, classified staff disagree with the statements on input into departmental budgets and the openness of the budget process.

Union members have higher averages on three statements: individual opportunity to participate in departmental decision-making, the integration of planning and budgeting, and the transparency of the departmental budgeting process. In each case, union and union-exempt employees are on the same side of the scale, but union members are more negative.

Gender and longevity have no statistically detectable impact on the departmental governance items.

2. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about governance, planning, and budgeting at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
Staff Senate (CEPAC) represents the interests of classified employees.	9.6	42.1	43.2	3.4	1.7	2.46
Classified staff have adequate representation in long-range planning and university goal-setting.	3.4	25.5	55.5	11.4	4.1	2.87
Classified staff have adequate opportunity for input into the university budgeting process.	1.4	14.2	57.4	20.4	6.6	3.17
I have an opportunity to serve on campus committees.	7.2	51.0	34.1	5.9	1.7	2.44
Classified staff participation in MSU governance is effective.	3.8	20.8	63.3	8.3	3.8	2.88
Decision-making at MSU is guided by the Five Year Vision document.	2.4	14.7	74.5	7.0	1.4	2.90
MSU's budget and planning processes are integrated.	1.7	15.7	72.0	8.4	2.1	2.93
MSU's budgeting process is an open process.	1.1	11.2	64.2	18.9	4.6	3.15

University-level governance items generate slightly different results. Small majorities agree with statements about Staff Senate's representativeness and individual opportunities to serve on committees. Majorities are neutral on the rest of the university planning, budget, and governance items. More classified staff disagree that there is adequate opportunity for input into budgeting and that the university budget process is open than agree with each item.

Union employees are slightly less likely to agree (2.51) than are union-exempt employees (2.33) that they have opportunities to serve on university committees. Union staff disagree on average (3.22) with the transparency of the university budget process, while union-exempt staff are neutral on average (3.04).

Women (2.41) are slightly more positive about Staff Senate's representativeness than are men (2.64). Employees with five or more years of service are more positive (2.37) about that same statement than are newer employees (2.52).

3. In the last 5 years, I have participated in

	Never	Occasionally	Regularly	Mean (1=Never, 3=Regularly)
Staff Senate (CEPAC) and/or its standing committees	84.8	10.7	4.5	1.20
Other college or university committees	66.9	22.4	10.7	1.44

Most classified employees have not served on Staff Senate or other committees, though employees are more likely to have served on college or university committees.

Union members, women, and longer-term employees are more likely to have served on college or university committees, and longer-serving employees are also more likely to serve on Staff Senate or its committees.

4. Please mark the level of information you have access to about governance and administration at MSU.

	Too little	About as much as I want	Too much	Mean (1=Too little, 3=Too much)
Information about classified staff input into university decisions	38.7	61.3	0.0	1.61
Information about major decisions in my department	41.5	58.5	0.0	1.58
Information about major decisions at MSU	54.4	45.6	0.0	1.46
Information about the Commissioner's Office and the Board of Regents	52.1	47.6	0.3	1.48

Virtually no classified employee receives too much information about any of the areas asked about. Majorities think they are getting the right amount about classified staff input into university decisions and about major decisions within the department. Majorities think they receive too little information about MSU decisions and about the Regents and Commissioner.

Gender does not affect the level of information received. Union members indicate receiving less information about staff input and departmental decisions than union-exempt employees. Employees with less than five years under their belts also indicate receiving less information about classified employee input.

Facilities

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about facilities services at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
The physical environment of my workplace is adequate for the job I need to do.	26.2	45.6	7.8	13.3	7.1	2.30
Custodial Services keeps my workplace adequately clean.	24.7	44.1	14.6	11.5	5.1	2.28
Furnishings/equipment in my workplace are adequately maintained.	19.0	51.7	18.0	9.2	2.0	2.23

Staff are in general agreement with the statements about facilities. One-fifth to one-quarter strongly agree with each statement, and a fifth or fewer disagree at any level.

Union status does not affect responses to the facilities items. Women (2.15) are more likely to agree than men (2.41) with the adequacy of maintenance. Longer-serving employees (2.43) are less likely to agree than shorter-term workers (2.15) about the adequacy of the physical environment.

Institutional Integrity

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about institutional integrity at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
Institutional regulations are consistently applied.	7.8	41.6	36.5	12.3	1.7	2.58
MSU appropriately supports ethnic and gender diversity on this campus.	19.1	49.5	28.3	2.4	0.7	2.16
MSU acts appropriately when fraud is reported or discovered.	10.6	37.0	47.6	4.1	0.7	2.47
MSU acts appropriately when sexual harassment is reported or discovered.	10.9	33.1	52.6	2.4	1.0	2.49
MSU acts appropriately when discrimination is reported or discovered.	9.7	29.7	55.5	2.8	2.4	2.59

Majorities are either positive or neutral about the statements on institutional integrity. Where there is majority neutrality, more staff members agree than disagree.

Though both union members and union-exempt employees agree on average with each statement, union members are less sanguine on three statements: appropriate support for ethnic and gender diversity, appropriate responses to sexual harassment reports, and appropriate responses to discrimination reports. Employees with more than five years of service at MSU are less positive about the consistent application of regulations. There is no significant differences between men and women on these issues.

Job Satisfaction, Salaries and Benefits

1. Please mark whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about salaries and benefits at MSU.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (1=Strongly agree, 5=Strongly disagree)
My salary is appropriate compared to other employees at MSU who perform similar work.	3.8	45.4	20.5	23.2	7.2	2.85
My salary is appropriate compared to employees elsewhere in Montana who perform similar work.	2.7	19.7	25.2	38.1	14.3	3.41
I am satisfied with my health insurance coverage.	17.5	57.5	12.7	10.3	2.1	2.22
The out-of-pocket costs for my health insurance are reasonable.	13.7	50.7	20.5	12.3	2.7	2.40
The TIAA/CREF retirement package is adequate for my needs (leave blank if TRS/PERS).	9.4	47.5	36.0	5.0	2.2	2.43
The TRS/PERS retirement package is adequate for my needs (leave blank if TIAA/CREF).	5.4	43.5	37.6	10.2	3.2	2.62

A plurality agrees that their salaries are appropriate compared to others on campus, though one-fifth are neutral and 30% disagree. Comparing salaries to the state yields very different responses, with 14% strongly disagreeing, nearly one in four disagreeing, and a quarter of the responses neutral. Only a fifth agree that the salary is appropriate when compared to others in Montana.

Benefits receive more positive responses, with majorities expressing satisfaction with insurance coverage, the reasonableness of out-of-pocket costs, and TIAA-CREF adequacy. TRS generate plurality agreement.

Union status has no impact on these responses. Men (2.48) are less positive about health insurance coverage than are women (2.15). Longer-term employees (3.32) are slightly more positive about salary comparisons across the state than are shorter-term (3.58). They are also less satisfied with their health coverage (2.37) than their shorter-serving colleagues (2.01).

2. Overall, how satisfied are you with your job at MSU?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Mean (1=Very satisfied, 4=Very dissatisfied)
29.2	60.0	9.2	1.7	1.83

Most classified employees are satisfied with their jobs, and nearly 30% are very satisfied. Only a small group expresses strong dissatisfaction. There are no differences across subgroups on job satisfaction.